

Michigan Women

A Publication
of the
Michigan
Women's
Commission

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◆ CHAIR EMMA BELL ◆ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JUDY KARANDJEFF ◆

The Michigan Women's Commission Celebrates Its 40th Anniversary

The Michigan Women's Commission (MWC) has enjoyed a long and successful history, beginning with its statutory creation in 1968. State Senator Lorraine Beebe was the author of the enabling statute. That year, Governor Milliken appointed 15 members as well as representatives from the Departments of Education, Social Services, Labor and Civil Service. Now we have liaisons from almost all of the state departments.

During our four decades we have done many projects and worked on many pieces of legislation. Highlighted below are a few activities for each decade. A complete history is on our website.

First, from 1968 to 1979, the members of the Michigan's Women's Commission, among many other accomplishments:

- held their first conference, "Equality: Challenge of Change" in 1973 - a tremendous success, with 800 participants.

- established "Michigan Women," the newsletter still published today

- researched and published "Domestic Assault: A Report on Family Violence in Michigan" which resulted in the passage of laws and the establishment of the Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board.

Second, from 1980-1989, MWC members:

- examined how to increase women's

economic independence in the coming decade, holding conferences such as, "Dialogue for Women in the 80%," referring to the fact that 80% of all dead-end, low paying jobs were held by women.

- helped to organize the Women's Assembly, a coalition of major women's organizations that adopted the platform "All issues are women's issues!"

(continued on page 2)

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MWC Celebrates Its 40th ...

continued from page 1



Governor Granholm speaks at the 40th Anniversary Reception.

- sponsored public hearings about child care. MWC policy recommendations resulted in the establishment of the Michigan 4-C (Community Coordinating Child Care) Association at the state level.
 - researched older women's issues and formed policy recommendations. The Commission formed the Task Force on Older Women's Issues and conducted public hearings. It published the report "Older Women's Issues," which was then submitted to the legislature.
- Third, from 1990 to 1999, MWC members:
- investigated the living conditions in Michigan's women's prisons, and published their findings in a report.
 - published the Women's Resource Directory,
- still distributed by the Commission today via the Commission website.
 - continued its tradition of influencing Michigan's legislative agenda when it lobbied for the passage of anti-stalking legislation.
 - continued its crusade against domestic violence by supporting a package of fifteen domestic violence bills.
 - began its involvement in the fight against the rape drug, GHB. The Commission campaigned to expose the dangers of GHB, rape drugs and club drugs.
- Fourth, from 2000 to the present, MWC commissioners:
- participated in the Domestic Violence Homicide Prevention Task Force. The Task Force released recommendations to improve legislation regarding prevention of domestic-violence-related homicides. The Commission supported 23 new legislative bills that passed in the Michigan legislature.
 - gathered information about issues of concern to women; hosted public hearings throughout the state. In 2005, Governor Jennifer Granholm released her women's agenda, based on our input from public hearings and meetings with women's organizations.
 - worked with the Institute for Women's Policy Research and others to conduct a survey on the status of women in Michigan, and, with the help of the Faith A. Knight Foundation, expanded the study to include each of the 83 counties in Michigan.
- hosted, with the MSU Women's Resource Center, and with the support of the U.S. Department of Labor and the Michigan Office of Career Development, the "Young Women, Strong Leaders" Conference at Michigan State University. Three similar conferences will be held in 2009.
 - helped analyze the impact of the anti-affirmative action constitutional amendment in state government programs; partnered with The White House Project to develop programs to encourage women to be involved in the political process and continued to be involved in supporting and opposing legislation and networking with women's organizations to achieve the Governor's Women's Agenda.

To commemorate the occasion, Governor Jennifer M. Granholm and the Michigan Women's Commission hosted a reception to which all past commissioners, executive directors and representatives from the many women's organizations in the state were invited. Thank you for all of your work and support during these 40 years!

The 25th Annual Michigan Women's Hall of Fame Induction

On October 15, the silver anniversary of the Michigan's Women's Hall of Fame was celebrated and new members were inducted. Seven women were honored at this annual celebration of the achievements of Michigan women.

The Contemporary inductees are:

Carol Atkins of Manistee, an author, poet and playwright who has advanced feminist themes and theories since the 1960s.

Patricia Cuza formerly of Lansing, the first executive director of the Michigan Women's Commission where she shaped the agency into an advocate for women as well as a legitimate governmental entity.

Carol King formerly of Detroit, a filmmaker and crusader for political, social and economic equality for women. King rose to prominence in Michigan NOW and fought for the Equal Rights Amendment.

Vicki Neiberg of East Lansing, an educator and advocate for juvenile justice, labor and women's rights.

The Historical inductees include:

Jane Johnston Schoolcraft of Sault Ste. Marie, a storyteller, translator, essayist and poet who is thought to be the nation's first Native American literary writer.

Leta Snow of Kalamazoo, founder of the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra and president and manager for

28 years while also helping to organize the League of American Orchestras.

Sister Mary Francilene Van de Vyver of Livonia, president of Madonna University for 25 years, spearheading efforts that doubled enrollment and established innovative academic offerings.

The Philip A. Hart Award goes to:

Thomas Wilson of Wyandotte, leader and advocate for gender equity in Michigan high school athletics.

Additionally, **Sandra Soifer**, formerly an assistant director for the Michigan State University (MSU) Alumni Association, has been tapped to be the next executive director of the Michigan Women's Historical Center and Hall of Fame in Lansing. She succeeds Dr. Gladys Beckwith, founder of the Historical Center and its executive director for the past 21 years.

Soifer was selected for her strong background in the administration of nonprofit organizations. Said Dr. Beckwith, "We were impressed with her experience in marketing, membership development, and the creation of partnerships with corporations. We feel she is uniquely qualified to lead the Historical Center into a financially secure future."

We also give thanks for and acknowledge all of the work and leadership provided by Dr. Beckwith!

SAFE SLEEP

According to the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH), in 2006, 940 infants did not live to celebrate their first birthday. Sixty five of these babies died due to suffocation. To address this issue MDCH is educating Michigan residents about safe sleep. Making sure your infant is safe is something every parent and care giver wants to do and this includes safety while infants sleep.

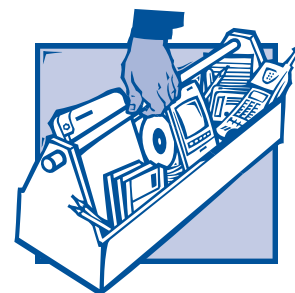


In Michigan, most suffocated deaths for infants occurred because of unsafe sleep environments – four out of five occurred in an adult bed, waterbed, couch or recliner.

Make sure your baby is happy and healthy. Place infants on their backs for EVERY sleep and don't share a bed with a baby. For more information on safe sleep visit the web site at www.michigan.gov/mdch.

CREATING A COMMUNICATIONS TOOLBOX

Join women from around the state for a free workshop, lunch and networking. The workshop is organized by Michigan Women Work! and co-sponsored by the Center for the Education of Women, University of Michigan; Michigan Women's Commission, Women's Center of Greater Lansing; and Women's Resource Center/Returning Adult Program, Lansing Community College. We will learn to put a new spin on the old press release, to use technology to share success stories and garner support for our work and then to network with other organizations. The program takes place on Friday, November 21, 10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., 124 North Capitol Avenue, Lansing. RSVP by November 10 to Jessica at Hamelj4@michigan.gov.



IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN RUNNING FOR OFFICE AND VOTING

According to the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), the U.S. currently ranks an astounding 71st in the world in women's political representation. Women leaders make up just 16% of the U.S. Congress, 23% of state legislatures, and 10% of big city mayors. In Michigan, we have our first woman Governor, one woman U.S. Senator, and 2 women members of the U.S. House Delegation from Michigan out of 15. There are 9 women out of 38 serving in the Michigan House, and 20 women in the Michigan House out of 110 members. We rank 32 among state legislatures for the proportion of women serving.



Women won the right to vote when the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution was adopted in 1920. More women than men are registered to vote and vote, both nationally and in Michigan. In 2004, 60.1 percent of women and 56.3 percent of men voted in the presidential elections nationally.

THE WHITE HOUSE PROJECT IN MICHIGAN

The White House Project is a national, nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) organization committed to enhancing public perceptions of women leaders and advancing a richly diverse, critical mass of women into political leadership. Thanks to funding from several Michigan foundations and individual donors, The White House Project's Vote, Run, Lead initiative has opened the door to elective office and political activism for over 1,000 Michigan women at events over the last year.

The White House Project's leadership training program, Vote, Run, Lead, recruits and equips women who do not traditionally identify as political leaders to

THE
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become politically empowered—including running for, and helping other women to run for, elective office. Vote, Run, Lead's expansion into Michigan seeks to create a permanent, nonpartisan pipeline to women's political leadership, and foster political representation that more adequately reflects the diversity of Michigan's communities. The series of trainings inspires, informs, and equips women leaders by providing nuts-and-bolts workshops on topics including campaign strategy, fundraising, communications, debate, public speaking, lobbying and coalition building.

When opening the Michigan Field Office last December, The White House Project had set the goal of reaching a total of 450 women through direct contact at their Vote, Run, Lead events in Michigan. In fact, the project substantially exceeded this number, reaching over 1,025 women through trainings, speaking engagements and networking events. The achievements included the inaugural Michigan Go Run, a 3-day training covering the fundamentals of campaign strategy, fundraising and communications, including panel discussions with female elected officials and "Closing the Leadership Gap" author Marie C. Wilson, as well as Michigan Debate Boot Camp, a day-long, in-depth training on public speaking and debate skills.

The White House Project plans to sustain the momentum of its work in Michigan with a full schedule of Vote, Run, Lead trainings over the next year. For more information, visit www.thewhitehouseproject.org.

Women and Retirement

A recent webinar sponsored by the National Women's Law Center revealed that women need more resources to ensure a secure retirement. Women live longer than men; in 2005, the life expectancy for US women was 80.4 years; men's life expectancy was 75.2 years. It's been estimated that on average women need to save 2 percent more than men per year – over 30 years – to achieve the same standard of living in retirement. It's more difficult for women to put money away for retirement because they earn 78 percent of what men earn, and work fewer years than men. Women are more likely to work fewer hours, work part-time, and leave the workforce for longer periods of time than men. Life events such as divorce can have more severe economic consequences for women. Women on average earn lower Social Security benefits in their own right and accrue smaller pensions than men.



The biggest mistakes women make about retirement are not taking time for money issues; not getting involved in managing their finances or family finances (just paying the bills doesn't count!); not estimating how much money they will need for the future – retirement; and not getting information or advice soon enough to make the best decisions.

For more information about retirement issues, go to www.nwlc.org.

NEW WOMEN'S DIRECTORY

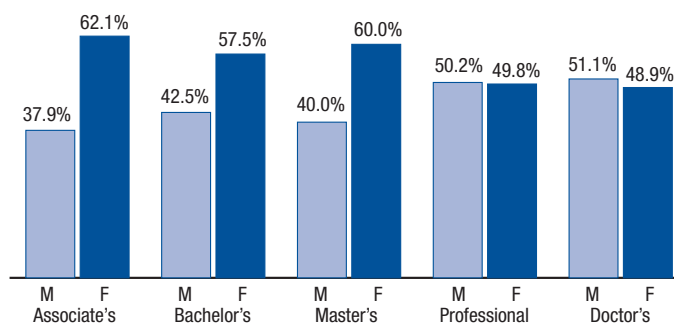
The Michigan Women's Commission has just completed updating its Women's Directory. Every year we try to get information from as many women's organizations as possible in order to complete our directory. Jessica Hamel, our intern from Michigan State University, has been leading this project this year. The new directory with over 700 organizations is available at our web site, www.michigan.gov/mdcr. If you have any corrections or additions, please email hamelj4@michigan.gov.

Women and Higher Education

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, between 1992-93 and 2005-06, the number and proportion of degrees awarded to women rose at all levels. American colleges and universities awarded 2.9 million degrees during the 2005-2006 academic year. 1.7 million degrees went to women and 1.2 million degrees went to men.

Distribution of Degree Awards between Men & Women, U.S.

Degrees Conferred in the 2005-2006 Academic Year



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics

As the figure indicates, women received more associate's degrees, bachelor's degrees, and master's degrees. Men received slightly more doctor's degrees and first professional degrees. A first professional degree is based on a program requiring at least 2 academic years of work beyond the bachelor's degree, e.g. dentistry, law or medicine.

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CALENDAR

Nov 4 – General Election www.michigan.gov/sos

Nov 13 – Michigan Department of Human Services' Poverty Conference, Cobo Hall, Detroit. For more information go to www.michigan.gov/poverty.

Nov 21 – 10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Women Work! Workshop & Networking Meeting, Lansing, MI. Meeting for all women's organizations. Sponsored by WomenWork! Michigan Women's Commission and others. For more information contact, MWC at 517 373-2884.

Nov 24 – 10 to noon, Michigan Women's Commission's Legislative Committee meeting, 110 West Michigan, Suite 800, Lansing, MI. For more information contact, MWC at 517 373-2884.

Nov. 26 – Sojourner Truth Day <http://www.sojournertruth.org/>

Dec. 1 – World AIDS Day www.worldaidsday.org

Dec. 10 – 10:00 a.m., Michigan Women's Commission meeting, 110 W. Michigan Ave., Lansing. Call (517) 373-2884

Mailing List Update

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